

PATENT
App. Ser. No.: 09/903,350
Atty. Dkt. No. ROC920010125US1
PS Ref. No.: IBMK10125

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) A method for providing viewership information to a plurality of television viewers, comprising:

collecting viewership data of a plurality of viewers, wherein the viewership data comprises a plurality of counts corresponding to a plurality of time intervals for each program, and wherein each count represents a number of viewers of a respective program during a respective time interval;

processing the viewership data to provide on-screen interface information; and
transmitting, to a plurality of end-user receivers, the on-screen interface information and data for an electronic program guide, wherein the on-screen interface information is viewable in one or more graphical representations of the plurality of counts displayed along with each respective program entry displayed by the electronic program guide on displays connected to the plurality of end-user receivers wherein transmitting the on-screen interface information further comprises transmitting data representing a growth rate of viewers for a particular program.

4-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) A method for providing viewership information to a plurality of television viewers, comprising:

collecting viewership data of a plurality of viewers, wherein the viewership data comprises a plurality of counts corresponding to a plurality of time intervals for each program, and wherein each count represents a number of viewers of a respective program during a respective time interval, wherein the viewership data is collected from a defined group of the plurality of end-user receivers;

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processing the viewership data to provide on-screen interface information; and transmitting, to a plurality of end-user receivers, the on-screen interface information and data for an electronic program guide, wherein the on-screen interface information is viewable in one or more graphical representations of the plurality of counts displayed along with each respective program entry displayed by the electronic program guide on displays connected to the plurality of end-user receivers, wherein transmitting the on-screen interface information comprises transmitting group information identifying group members of the defined group.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein transmitting the on-screen interface information comprises transmitting group information indicating how many members of the defined group are watching a program.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein transmitting the on-screen interface information comprises transmitting group information indicating a group rating for a program.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein transmitting the on-screen interface information comprises transmitting group information indicating which members of the defined group are watching a program.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the members are identified by: extracting member identification information from the viewership data; and referencing a database containing group information.

12-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Previously Presented) A signal processing unit for processing television signals, comprising:
a first connector for receiving a video signal transmitted from a remote provider;

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a second connector for receiving a viewership signal containing viewership data collected from a plurality of viewers, wherein the viewership data comprises a plurality of counts corresponding to a plurality of time intervals for each program, and wherein each count represents a number of viewers of a respective program during a respective time interval;

a memory containing an on-screen guide interface formatable with the viewership data; and

a processor configured to format the on-screen guide interface with the viewership data, wherein the viewership data is formatted as one or more graphical representations of the plurality of counts displayed along with each respective program entry displayed with an electronic program guide, wherein the processor is configured to format an on-screen guide interface with viewership indicators using the viewership data, wherein the viewership indicators indicate a viewership growth rate in at least one program being transmitted in the video signal.

25-26. (Cancelled)

27. (Previously Presented) An on-screen program guide information provider system, comprising:

a first network connection with a plurality of devices configured to collect viewership data of a plurality of television viewers, wherein the viewership data comprises a plurality of counts corresponding to a plurality of time intervals for each program, and wherein each count represents a number of viewers of a respective program during a respective time interval;

a second network connection with a plurality of end-user receivers; and

a processor configured to:

(i) process the viewership data to provide on-screen guide formatting information;

(ii) transmit, via the second network connection, the on-screen guide formatting information to the plurality of end-user receivers, wherein the on-

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screen guide formatting information is used by the end-user receivers to output viewership indicators to displays connected to the plurality of end-user receivers, wherein each viewership indicator comprise one or more graphical representations of the plurality of counts displayed along with each respective program entry displayed with an electronic program guide, wherein the on-screen guide formatting information comprises a growth rate of viewers for a particular program.

28-32. (Cancelled)

33. (Currently Amended) An on-screen program guide information provider system, comprising:

a first network connection with a plurality of devices configured to collect viewership data of a plurality of television viewers, wherein the viewership data comprises a plurality of counts corresponding to a plurality of time intervals for each program, and wherein each count represents a number of viewers of a respective program during a respective time interval;

a second network connection with a plurality of end-user receivers;

a processor configured to:

(i) process the viewership data to provide on-screen guide formatting information;

(ii) transmit, via the second network connection, the on-screen guide formatting information to the plurality of end-user receivers, wherein the on-screen guide formatting information is used by the end-user receivers to output viewership indicators to displays connected to the plurality of end-user receivers, wherein each viewership indicator comprise one or more graphical representations of the plurality of counts displayed along with each respective program entry displayed with an electronic program guide; and

an external news server in communication with the processor, wherein the processor is further configured to determine whether a particular program is significant

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based on at least one of a size and a growth rate of a current viewing audience, and for each significant program, transmit [[an]] alert information to the plurality of end-user receivers.

34-43. (Cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) A computer ~~data signal embodied in a transmission medium~~, comprising a computer readable storage device having stored thereon:

on-screen program guide interface information containing viewership information of a plurality of television viewers, wherein the viewership information comprises a plurality of counts corresponding to a plurality of time intervals for each program, wherein each count represents a number of viewers of a respective program during a respective time interval, wherein the on-screen interface information is readable by a plurality of receivers having a network connection with a television program provider, wherein the viewership information comprises group information indicating which members of a group are watching a program, and wherein viewership information is configured for formatting an on-screen program guide to include one or more graphical representations of the plurality of counts displayed along with each respective program entry displayed with the on-screen program guide.

45-47. (Cancelled)